(b) if so, the details of the efforts made so far in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) The reforms in the insurance sector were widely debated by various forums from time to time with representatives of managements of public sector insurance companies and their trade unions; consumer interest groups, chambers of commerce and industry; academics etc. The scope of the reforms was further discussed by the Standing Committee on Finance with all concerned at the time of taking a view on the Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill, 1996. Since the matter has already been comprehensively considered by all concerned, the Finance Minister in his 1998-99 Budget speech announced that the insurance sector would be opened to competition from private Indian companies and the Insurance Regulatory Authority would be converted into a statutory body. Necessary legislation in the matter will be introduced shortly.

Deposits made by Public/Private Sector Banks in Punjab

1000. SARDAR GURCHARAN SINGH TOHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the deposits made with various public/private sector banks in Punjab during the last three financial years and the credits/ advances made for the development in Punjab during the corresponding period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): The aggregate deposits and gross bank credit of all Scheduled Commercial Banks including public/private sector banks and Regional Rural Banks as furnished by Reserve Bank of India, during the last three years in Punjab are given below:

(Rs. in crore)

As at the end of	Deposits	Credit
March 1996	20075.45	8406.90
March 1997	23042.76	9015.06
March 1998	27517.61	10628.23

Letter of Credit Fraud in SBI

1001. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of the officials identified who have connived with the Madhumita Group of Industries and cheated the S.B.I. in the letter of credit fraud and what action has been taken against each;

(b) how much funds have been locked up in the scam; and

(c) whether similar fraud have taken place in other branches of SBI and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M. R. JANARTHANAN): (a) Investigations conducted by State Bank of India (SBI) have resulted in identification of one Chief Manager, one Manager, two erstwhile Managers, one Accountant, one Field Officer, one Passing Officer and one System Administrator, all of Baghbazar branch who appear to have connived with the Group in commission of the fraud. All the above officials have been placed under suspension pending framing of charges against them. Central Bureau of Investigation have also registered a case in the matter.

(b) An amount of Rupees 112 crores (approx.) is involved in the fraud.

(c) Investigation has revealed that the Group had dealing with seven other